The Berrien County Historical Association

The Docket

The History Center at Courthouse Square

May 2020 | Volume 36, Issue 5

BCHA Events - May

Events may change based on community health needs and we encourage you to contact us if you have more questions.

May 1 to 15
Museum Closed, SAH Order Extension
The museum will remained close per the order of the Governor through May 15. We will reopen to the public for regular hours beginning May 16.

May 16 to June 30
A Walk in the Park: Green Spaces & Parks of Berrien County
Sheriff's Residence
Explore the history of the places where recreation and nature meet. Guests will be able to view never before seen pictures, interact with maps, and even take a selfie with Ranger Brock Ransom.

May 16 to May 31
$1,$3, & $5 Sale
On the Docket Books and Gifts
Help us spring clean and make room for new inventory in our gift shop with our newest sale! Select books and gifts will be on sale in May for $1, $3, or $5. *Please note this sale replaces our National Wine Day Sale for May.*

May and June
Vendor and Sponsorship Registration Open
Old Fashioned 4th of July Ice Cream Social
The Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social returns to the Courthouse Square in July and we are looking for a few good vendors and sponsors! Sponsorships are open through the start of June and vendors (food, craft, and community) can register until the end of June (pending spaces). Forms can be found **here**.

And Now a Word from the Director

Nothing on this earth is standing still. It's either growing or dying. No matter if it's a tree or a human being.

Lou Holtz

My dear friends,

Fundamentally I know today is May 1st and that we're now in the 5th month of the year, but time doesn't really seem so linear and set any more. I'm not really sure where April went and March felt like it went on forever. I'm curious if Goldilocks will find her perfect medium this month.

We're still closed and will remain as such through the middle of the month, but the closure these last eight weeks has forced us to rethink, redo, and even reassess. We've been enjoying the challenges.

This past week, we interviewed eight candidates for the curatorial position and we are so lucky to have had such qualified individuals be so excited about our organization. We are currently making our final decision, but I can tell you that whomever joins us in the coming weeks, we're all the better for having them.

I continued to increase our online presence as best we could given our lack of technology here at the museum and our Tell it to Me Thursdays have been popular. We're still working to get those online for people to enjoy off facebook.

Our Maker Mondays seem to be quite popular and we plan on continuing in May by finishing the series and adding another

Mondays & Fridays in May
Maker Mondays
1:00 p.m., Facebook
Join us every Monday as we post a new page from our workbook, Michigan's Early Years. These printable worksheets and accompanying questions get us thinking about our past in new ways. Solutions posted every Friday at 3:00 p.m. Want to join us but not on Facebook? Get the workbook **here** and the answers **here**.

Thursdays in May
Sketches Scavenger Hunt
1:00 p.m., Facebook/ Constant Contact
As the state moves to reopen, we're encourage people to explore local history through a county-wide scavenger hunt. We will pull our clues from Bob Myer's Historical Sketches of Berrien County. Each week we will post a new hunt. Participants will then email their answers to us and correct ones will be put in a drawing to win a $50.00 gift certificate for On the Docket Books and Gifts.

May 14
TNC Talk: Berrien County's Farmer's Markets and Roadside Stands with Laura Gillis Green, 6:30 p.m.
Zoom Online Session
The month of May means that farmer's markets and roadside stands filled with fresh fruits, veggies, and flowers are around the corner. Join us as Laura Gillis Green of the Michigan Farmer's Market Association talks about the history of these Berrien County staples! *NOTE: This program has moved online. Please be on the lookout for our press releases with log-in information!*

May 21
Pioneer Explore from Home Day
Pick up: Murdock Cabin
With schools closed for the rest of the semester, we're bringing our Pioneer Day field trip to you! Packets with select worksheets, activities, and crafts will be made available for parents to pick up. RSVPs will be required to ensure we have enough packets on hand.

program to make up for the loss of Pioneer Day this year. 2020 must be the year of the Pioneer.

I was able to knock a few things off our Honey Do list, including cleaning up - or least organizing the best we can - the upper level of the Sheriff's residence and I removed some window coverings on our hall windows. While the new-found brightness has been great, every day I leave the office and panic that I forgot to turn off the lights.

I also took the time to start the renovation of our Green room in the courthouse, including painting and ripping up carpet nails so the beautiful wooden floors can be seen. When done, this space will be the perfect spot for our brides and guests speakers to enjoy and prepare in.

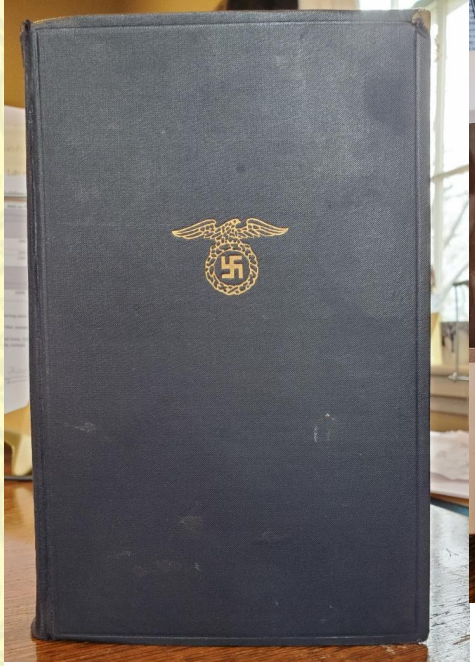
I still have items on my to-do list (don't we all?) that I'd like to get done before we re-open, among them finishing the Green room, starting our calendar for our Quarter 3 events, and finalizing forms for our in-house use. I also have some planned grants to write for some fun things to add to our grounds (and not just signs!).

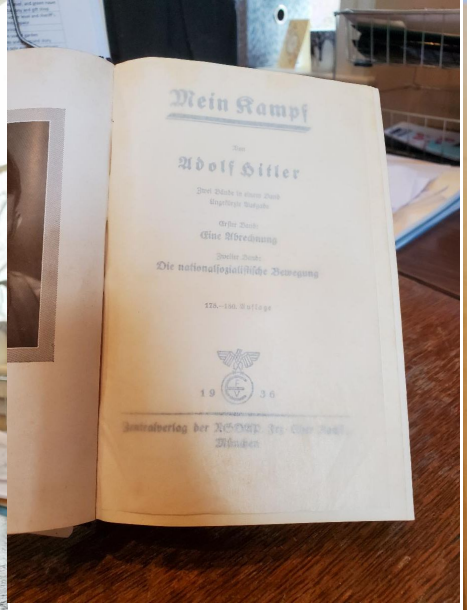
And maybe I'll get started on the new website at some point. You know the website I've been saying that I'd get started working on since last December? No time like the present, right?

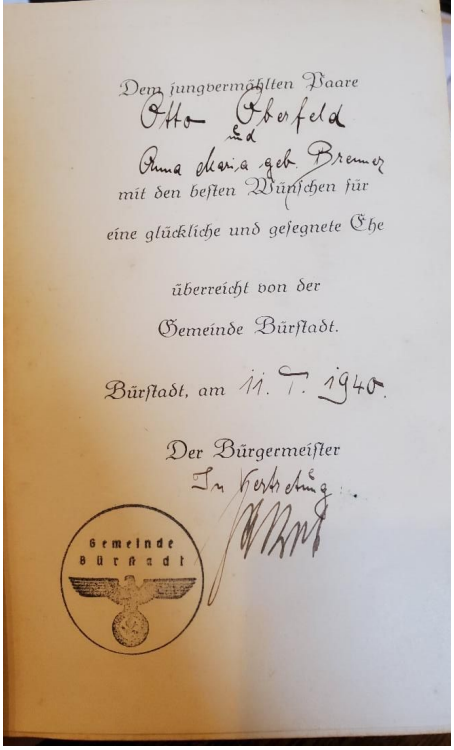
In the mean time, we're hope that May proves to be warm and sunny, allowing new habits and even ways of life to grow successfully. We're not sure what April showers will grow in May besides the flowers, but I think together, we'll be able to handle anything with a little love and humor on our side.

Historically yours,

A Curated Corner: A Curious Curio







By Rhiannon Cizon, Director

Throughout April, I have been hosting a weekly Facebook live series that dives deep into our world of museums and our April 16th program was about archives (paper goods). As I was rummaging through various cabinets and boxes looking for different examples, I stumbled across this artifact. When I saw *Mein Kampf* on the spine, I was taken aback and down right shocked to see the Nazi emblem on the front.

When I opened it, I saw the above piece of paper attached to the very first page. I didn't have time to do much research before I went live, but I did some digging later. This piece came to us in 2004 via donor Gregory Mason. His father, Walter, had taken it as a souvenir while in Germany during World War II. It was not uncommon for pieces like this to be taken by American soldiers and sent or smuggled home, although low level items like this weren't normally confiscated by higher ups.

A rough translation of the inside page tell us this was a wedding gift to Otto and Anna Maria (nee Bremer) Aberfeld. It was signed by the local Burgermeister, although we are unable to read the handwriting or signature. We can't be certain what month they were married but clearly it was in the town of Burstadt in 1940.

Further research shows that under the Nazi regime, every couple who married received a copy o f *Mein Kamp*f as a "personal" wedding gift from Adolph Hitler. These versions went into production in 1936 (as indicated by the publishing date in the middle photo) and thanks to this very cleaver trick, Hitler could claim high sales of his book to the tune of 12 million copies between 1936 and 1945. It was also used for propaganda purposes - if the book was seen as commercially popular, then the Nazi Party could claim higher interest in the party creed then there actually was among the general German population.

We have reached out the library in Burstadt to see if we can learn more about Otto and Anna Aberfeld and to find out who the mysterious Burgermeister is so we can close some holes in our information about the origins of this particular piece.

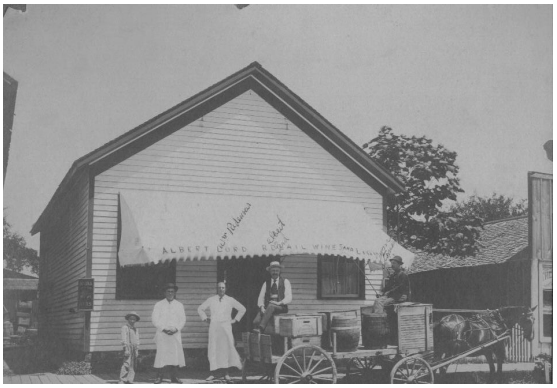
I felt it was important to highlight this artifact because often times a museum's archives and collections will be home to items that may be uncomfortable for some people. When we realize that history is a prism rather than black and white, we began to understand the true nature of the human experience. It can be argued that there is no need for this item to be in our collections because it is not directly related to Berrien County's history, but we argue that this is connected to a lived experience of one of our residents and it is important to have items that

tell those stories fully. This isn't to say that we don't have a line we'd draw on items we accept, but sometimes those uncomfortable items spur the greatest searches in history

For now, this book will go back into our vaults for preservation until we need it again. And maybe next month we'll have an update to report on Otto, Anna, and the mysterious burgermeister of Burstadt.

Into the Collection Vaults: Wine and Dine Me

May 25th is National Wine Day and what better way to celebrate our very own wine country than with a peek at items from our collections that are all about wine. This month, we're changing things up and bringing you photos of collection items along side our archival photos!



Photograph of a saloon in downtown Eau Claire, ca. 1900. A wagon with crates and barrels of beer and other goods is drawn up in front of the saloon. "Albert Lord, Retail Wines and Liquors" is printed on the saloon awning.

Two men identified as Albert Lord and William Ridenour are standing in front of the saloon. A man identified as Tom Stover is seated on the wagon.

This brass communion set was donated to us by the Berrien County Association of Churches and was used at Camp Warren in Hagar Township. The camp, which no longer exists, closed in the 1990s due to lack of funds.

The pieces are marked US and it was speculated that the set was originally military issued before making it way to Camp Warren.

We're not exactly sure what the purpose of this white ceramic jug was for, although we know that it came to us in 1980 from Mrs.

Bottle of white table wine produced by the Tabor Hill Winery in Buchanan, Michigan, in December 1976. Green glass bottle,

D. Verne Harris. Wm. Steinmeyer was a wine merchant based out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Cursory research shows these were mostly advertising jugs and ranged from the large one gallon jug in our collections down half gallon sizes.

Currently this piece is on display in the Murdock Cabin.

buff-colored paper label.

This special bottle of wine was produced to commemorate the LaSalle II Expedition of 1976. The expedition, led by school teacher Reid Lewis, retraced the voyage of Rene Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle, from Montreal to the mouth of the Mississippi River. High school students, authentically dressed and equipped, conducted the expedition.

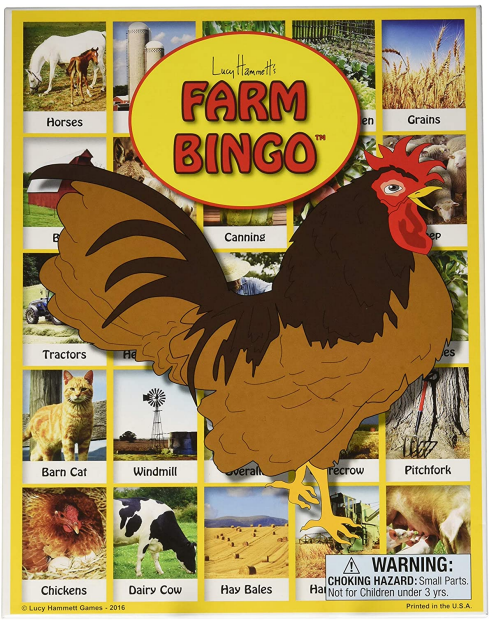
The La Salle II Expedition came through Berrien County on the St. Joseph River. The label on the back of the bottle is signed by all the members of the expedition.

On the Docket Books & Gifts: Let Your Gardens Grow

by Tara Velez, Museum Operations Coordinator

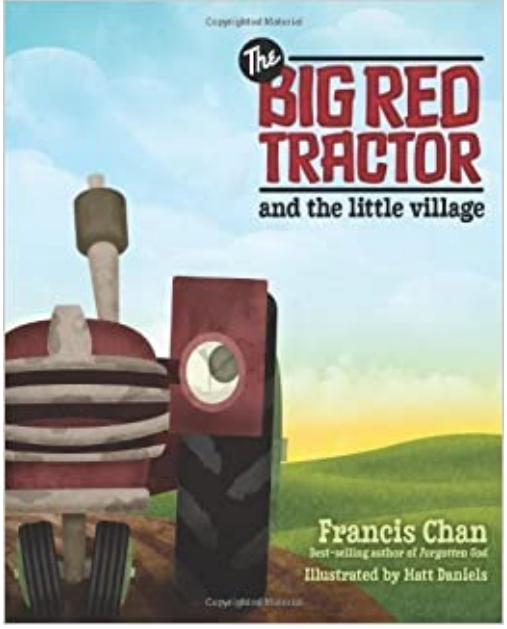
April showers are coming and so is Earth Day, so On the Docket is showcasing the great goodies we have that help us celebrate the earth and all the amazing things that grow in the rich soil here in Berrien County.

If you are wanting to purchase something from On the Docket, Shopping in the Time of COVID-19 is easy! You can place an order with us via email (info@berrienhistory.org) and we'll ship it to you! If you are local, you can make arrangements for pick up of your item with staff.

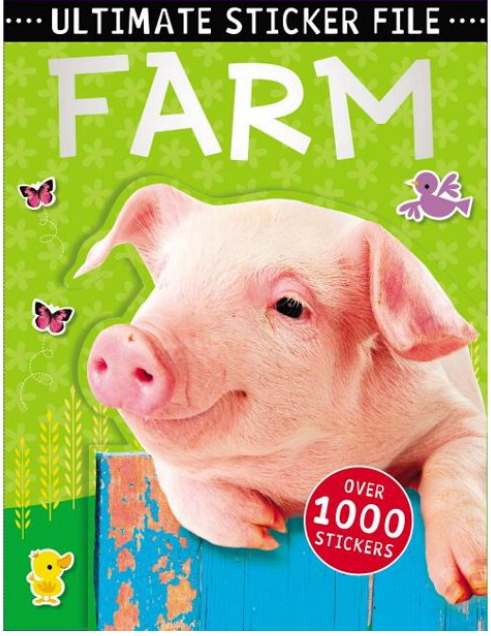


Lucy Hammett Farm Bingo Set

Roy Toy Log Building Set - The Farm



The Big Red Tractor and the Little Village by Francis Chan



Ultimate Sticker File: Farm

A Collections Update: The Musicasters

L to R: Mike Romeo, Aubrey Douglas, Jack Crow, Terry White, and Delmar White

Last month we featured this photo in The Docket. We loved it so much we made it a featured photo for our **free virtual background album**. We also shared these backgrounds on facebook and Terry White (second from right) found us!

He noted that only he and his brother Delmar (far right) are still alive today. Many of Terry's friends had comments about watching the band play around the area and even had memories of SURF. The power of the internet to help us flesh out the stories of our collections!

*Not into zoom? Check out our free phone backgrounds **here**!*

Friends and Partners

Thank you to our partners for making this month's programs and exhibits a reality!

Michigan STATE PARKS

Learn More About Us!

Enjoyed this content? Click here to support the BCHA!

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Tara Velez, Museum Operations Coordinator
Lori Fedore, Complex Caretaker

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of the BCHA is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Berrien County through exhibits, tours, publications, and educational and community outreach programs for public benefit.

About the Berrien County Historical Association

The History Center at Courthouse Square is operated by the Berrien County Historical Association and is located in Berrien Springs, MI. Since 1967, the BCHA has operated the five buildings located on Courthouse Square, including the 1839 Courthouse, an 1830s log cabin, a recreated blacksmith forge, an 1870s sheriff's residence, and the 1860s county

records building. For more information about our exhibits and programs, contact the BCHA at 269-471-1202. Find us ***online***, on ***Facebook***, and on ***Instagram***.